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ABSTRACT

American Indian education must be viewed in the context of: environments and their effect upon education (external environments, psychological environments, etc.); the trends and movements affecting Indian education (self-determination, local control, revenue sharing, economic development, etc.); agencies and other factors determining the direction of Indian educational reform (Federal funding, national policy, Federal trust responsibility, professional research, etc.). Based upon assessment of these factors, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) must consider programs and program objectives that provide for: inventories of human and material resources that are tribal specific and take into account local, state, and national factors; clarification of internal and external cultural factors affecting educational design; recognition of the assets and limitations of local program capabilities; development of rapid access to existing inventories of human and material resources. Likewise, legislation must be evaluated in terms of: facilitating rapid needs assessments; recognizing alternatives; developing sensitive and multi-disciplinary research programs; organizing research information. These goals could be accomplished via a Federal interagency council (research/development support for new legislation) and by use of multi-disciplinary teams in the regional BIA agencies. (JC)

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SPEAKER: Dave Warren, Director, Research and Cultural Studies Development Center, Institute of American Indian Arts, Santa Fe, New Mexico

TOPIC: Future Directions for the BIA Role in Indian Education

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PERSPECTIVES IN INDIAN EDUCATION

The history of Indian people in the United States has a special character defined by legal statutes, philosophical and cultural considerations and a complex system of persistence or viability elements perculiar to the Indian society. For these reasons, any discussions of, or recommendations for Indian education for the next decade or generation must be made with full awareness of the special status of Indian communities and particular factors of viability that determine cultural integrity and strength for a people.

Indian education in the future is part of the continuum of history. Yet challenges facing Indian people in the immediate years ahead are nearly unprecedented in scope and dynamics of change. One must reconcile the momentum of previous policies and programs that flow from the past with current environments and newly forming trends of change. Hidden or emerging resources of the Indian community are keys to any hope for innovative and significant education reform that function for, and fulfill the need of, these communities. Traditional skills must be used by Indian people in unique programs that deal with the concussion effect of social change internal to the Indian community; experts and consultants will come and go, some providing major assistance to Indian communities, others not; in either case, the outside expert is a transient element in community development. In short, the Indian community must be allowed to marshall its resources and apply them in a full range of educational activity and program development; they must be allowed to develop programs that are realizations of self-actualized strength in determining the destiny of their communities and personal lives.

Indian education must comprehend the total range of programs affecting early childhood, elementary, secondary and higher education; the implications for special education (exceptional children and adult education) are vast and profound. These are presumed elements in this paper.

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Indian education must be viewed in context with major perspectives that include:

(1) Description of "environments" and the effect of such environments on Indian education. These environments include: relationships with external agencies by tribes; impinging elements of population growth (megalopolis) on previously well-defined entities; psychological environments (the pluralistic

society at large vs. the pluralism of American Indian society); professional research in history, anthropology, education and its influence on national policy regarding assimilation, or pluralism as a basis for dealing with Indian communities (concommitants: Dawes Act, Meriam Report, Collier Era, Termination Period, New Frontier Self-Determination).

(2) Discussion of the trends and movements affecting Indian education including: "self-determination" (concommitant: local control of education); decentralized nature of national affairs ("revenue sharing" phenomenon) with the accompanying increased relationships between states and Indian communities; demographis changes, including on-reservation ubanism, return of the relocation persons of the 1950's to reservations; the rise of on-reservation economic development projects that represent access mechanisms to a previously tightly controlled perimeters of a closed Indian cultural life, "emerging nations" phenomenon among Indian communities (concommitant: "revolution of rising expectations" and self-determination movement, all indicating formation of new institutions or significant modification of traditional systems).

(3) A review of the agencies and factors that determine the direction of Indian education reform and direction. Among these are: significance of federal funding and the fluctuations of such funding in carrying out locally determined programs; the manner in which national policy -- liberal or conservative -- influences the development of Indian education; the issue of "federal trust responsibility" as a tenuous element in achieving local community control and development in general and educational program development; professional educators, materials developers, teacher training, accreditation agencies and the determination of functional programs defined by the Indian community. Emergence and utilization of new institutions and agencies within traditional systems, such as the Indian community college consortium, the BIA Higher Education units (Haskell Indian Junior College, Institute of American Indian Arts and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute).

(4) Based on assessments of these factors, forces and trends, considerations must be given to how Indian communities can accomplish the determination of education program objectives and for implementation approaches to such objectives:

a. inventory process of human and material resources, particular to the tribes, and taking into account relative tribal, local and state and national factors.

b. clarification of internal (emic) and external (etic) cultural factors in determination of education programs (goals, designs and measurements). A new role for applied research.

c. survey assets and limitations of local program capability for development, considering relationships with external agencies for assistance/support.

d. develop rapid access to existing inventories of human and material resources, exemplary programs and other program data for orderly dissemination to users.

We must discover ways to fully implement long standing recommendations for Indian education. A basic premise of this challenge is how to validate the traditional sources of knowledge and utilize the functional techniques of traditional Indian culture in contemporary designs and developments of educational programs. Unless

the Indian community can recognize that it has direct and immediate investments in an educational program, it is likely we will duplicate the recommendations of the past and fail to achieve any progress in meeting unique needs of Indian people in the 21st century.

As early as 1928, one of the most comprehensive studies on Indian program administration was completed. The Meriam Report contained specific recommendations on the education of Native Americans. Recommendations appeared such as greater community involvement, cultural contributions to the educational process, including more relevant curriculum, use of Indian languages and better teacher training in relation to Indian culture. These recommendations if fully incorporated in the educational approaches might have offset such observations as the following, contained in the Meriam study:

> The belief has apparently been that the shortest road to civilization is to take children away from their parents and insofar as possible to stamp out the old Indian life. The Indian community activities have often been opposed if not suppressed.....the action taken has often been the radical one of attempting to destroy rather than the educational process of gradual modification and development. (Meriam, 1928: 15). [emphasis added.]

In the last few months, Congress inacted the so-called "Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (S. 1017)." That act contains the following preamble:

> An Act. To promote maximum Indian participation in the government and education of the Indian people; to provide for the full participation of Indian tribes in programs and services conducted by the federal government for Indians and to encourage the development of the human resources of the Indian people; to establish a program of assistance to upgrade Indian education; to support the right of Indian citizens to control their own educational activities; to train professionals in Indian education; to establish an Indian youth intern program;.....

In December, 1974, another action was taken by Congress which has bearing on our discussion. This action established the American Indian Policy Review Commission. Some consider this Commission as the successor to the Meriam Report investigations which ushered in the so-called Indian New Deal of the 1930's.

These actions are timely, logical and long awaited in the history of Indian affairs. However, passage of legislation does not always guarantee the needed changes.

If we consider the significance of the Meriam Report and the subsequent policies and programs of the 1930-50 period, one fact emerges: there was limited and short-lived alteration to program structures in governmental agencies which were to respond to such potentially innovative and develop viable programs. One need only review the history and circumstances surrounding the educational modifications which were to support political institutional change under the Indian Reorganization Act. The period of Willard Beatty is prominent by its somewhat anomalous watershed character. Bilingual educational materials and in-service teacher training programs that partially satisfied needs for special cultural education preparation and other activities were part of that era.

I cite these events as a reminder of the previous history of programs that were often described in the terminology of self-determination and local control. By 1944, opponents to the innovations of John Collier won the day.

An article appeared in the publication The American Indian in 1944 which summarized the situation at the close of an important era:

> [In reference to concerns and approaches in handling the Indian programs to date.] The hard boiled approach has just cropped up in Congress. The Indian ought to be turned loose immediately even if it means starvation for large numbers. Neither of these attitudes is realistic [referring to sentimental approaches and the Congressional position].
>
> The Indian problem must be viewed objectively in its social and economic terms. For these folk people have ways of life which are radically different from ours. Their cultures must be thoroughly understood so that the differences may be constructively used in administration. The close kinship groups, the natural communities and other social groupings are still of binding importance in the majority of Reservation societies. Both missionary and Government have fought these institutions as hindrances to progress. Only recently have we seen that they can be potent tools in the reestablishment of morale and in the successful initiation of many programs which have previously failed.
>
> There is no question but that drastic changes in the mode of living were necessary for most American Indian tribes. They had to meet changed conditions. Recently, [i.e., Collier period] a new and more constructive policy which seeks to reorganize Reservation societies on an economically sound basis has been initiated. Whether it can be carried through to success remains to be seen. But certainly, this is not time to abandon the whole effort. (Scudder McKeel, "The American Indian as a Minority Group Problem," The American Indian, II, no. 1 (Fall, 1944), 11; cited in Tyler, History of Indian Policy, 1973, pp. 143-144).

Recent statistics indicate two-thirds of the Indian student population is in public schools. This fact alone reminds us that current and historical issues and problems in Indian education are matters that all educators must contend with. The role of the BIA can be extremely helpful to others if certain new almost radical, yet logical, steps are taken which will more clearly delineate the lessons of the past and suggest directions for the future.

BIA experience in Indian affairs, dates from 1824 when the Office of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was created within the War Department. That office however, inherited much in policies from English colonial policies and offices. As such, there is a history of almost over one and a half centuries which the BIA can claim as a heritage and legacy. The history of more clearly seen education program development begins about 1870 during the so-called reservation period. Up to that time, missionary groups were the primary agents in Indian education. In either case, federal program or missionary agency, the effort was made to bring Indian society into conformity with what was considered more civilized. Since those days, various experiments and efforts have been

followed by reflecting and fluctuating policies between enforced assimilation to a benevolent paternalism which espoused a position in support of cultural relativity and self-determination.

On a broader horizon, the entire sweep of institutional and cultural confrontation between native peoples and European civilization has been concerned with the issues of incorporating or accommodating Indian society in a greater social, economic and cultural system in which the origins and destiny of either were not always similar. That issue was often resolved by pragmatic military or political measures.

There is, however, a lesson to be learned from the past attempts by European governments to integrate or assimilate the Indian society. That process or policy has too often been focused on one or two of many vital elements that define societal system. These elements are the religious, economic, political and social systems or institutions. The contact-conquest pattern was usually characterized by a sequence that began with religious conversion and followed by political integration in the new society. Economic integration lagged behind or sometimes did not enter at all into the change process. As a result, the character of integration of Indian society into the new society was often determined by focus on either religious, political or an economic base that did not develop the native community base. The Indian community tended to remain in an "evolutionary cul de sac" as Edward Spicer describes the phenomenon. Without a comprehensive approach which acknowledges the total interrelationship of the religious, political, economic and social systems, the Indian community is likely to remain essentially traditional and without the growth potential to move to newer levels of organization. The significance of the social structure in context with the other factors is important:

> .....it appears that in those instances where there was greater continuity in social structure there was the least degree of cultural replacement and hence the least change in the direction of the dominant culture. (Spicer, p. 586).

In relation to this statement, Indian education in many ways can be reduced to one fundamental factor: the family and community. While that factor may seem to have common meaning for all education today, it has certain special considerations for the Indian people. The discussions of James Coleman on the issue of home versus school in student achievement, other studies on the origins of alienation and countless references to the need to combine affective and cognitive dimensions in educational strategy and pedagogy seem to bring a special charge to Indian education objectives and methodology. Often we can still describe the Indian family in extended family terms. That family is still able to relate to a major communal society system. As a result, the Indian community must begin to recognize itself in a more comprehensive way as an educational support group, resource and training element, innovator of special education programs.

This situation concerns the meaning of "Self-determination." Self-determination for Indian communities is a very complex matter. Mr. Sam Deloria, Director, Indian Law Center, University of New Mexico, has commented on the meaning of the forthcoming work of the American Indian Policy Review Commission:

> The commission is a great opportunity, but it's a danger too. There are some inconsistent policies with respect to Indians, and these policies may not be susceptible to resolution in one report. There's (Federal) trusteeship and there's self-determination. You really can't live both. (National Observer, February 15, 1975).

Further, there is provision in the Commission's study for the consideration of alternative systems of representation of Indian tribes in the national government. It is suggested that some form of representation of Indian people in the senate or house can be considered. Further, very recently it was disclosed in local newspapers, that a report, "The Role of the Interior Department in the Leasing of Indian Lands" suggests more attention to the gravity and complexity of tribal dealings in land or business development. It is imperative that safeguards be maintained that will guarantee traditional protections in both legal and cultural aspects of reservation land and tribal political control. (Santa Fe New Mexican, February 16, 1975).

These remarks on contemporary events and developments suggest the Indian community is entering one of the most significant and difficult eras of its history. At no time in the past has there been such complex, rapidly developing challenge to the community. At the same time, there is no precedent for the number of opportunities for Indian people to work in their own behalf. The degree to which that self-actualization, self-development and final self-determination will occur greatly depends on attitudes, policies and practices of all agencies that deal with the Indian people. Self-determination in Indian education has too often been defined in political terms: if only the local Indian community can gain a majority control on the local school board then all problems will vanish. That is not the case. Self-determination must also include the ability of the Indian community to affect the total character of education in line with special needs of the Indian community. Those needs concern not only learning special skills in the cognitive sense but learning how such skills will strengthen the affective elements of personal and collective community life. All agencies must see a role in the recognition and support of an alternative educational system which may be physically located on an Indian reservation or conceptually a system with specific meaning to the educational programs of public schools.

The current legislation, particularly S. 1710, must also be evaluated in relation to: (1) how well provisions or mandates facilitate rapid assessment of needs; (2) recognition of options or alternative systems in seeking solutions to problems; (3) development of sensitive research programs that approach Indian community education on an integrated multi-disciplinary basis; (4) organization of resource information on earlier programs or corollary activities.

In short, has S. 1710 or other legislation accomplished significant changes in traditional governmental agencies? The Meriam Report, Havighurst and other reports attest to the fact that implementation of recommendation is a history of institutional struggle in relating national policy to a diverse array of realities in the Indian community. The BIA and others must have capability to deal with assessment, training, resource identification and refinement of objectives on a multi-discipline and multi-level approach. While the current legislation fails to establish certain mechanisms for the proper implementation of the new programs, certain options for this purpose may exist:

> 1. Provide for a federal interagency council which will establish research and development support for the provisions of the new legislation. As indicated in remarks by Mr. Deloria and the Land Leasing report, we must fully realize the deep and sensitive relationship between culture, economic development and community stability. Education program development must rely on full utilization of resources and data from other projects or programs. The question emerges, how readily available are the findings of National Science Foundation, National Institute of Education or countless other agencies on Indian education. What are potential

values or services to be derived from educational technology in satellites, computer and other programs? How are these findings collated and disseminated so that the results can be used in clarifying national policy or program direction in Indian education.

2. Regional agencies of the BIA or other agencies should have multi-disciplinary terms assigned or available to the federal, state or other agency office or staff. Regional differences are critical in understanding tribal, economic resource, state-tribe and many other contingencies. With the added dimension of a select team of professional educator, anthropologist (of the Spicer type), historian, legal historian and systems analyst; among others, the government administrator has benefit of many perceptions and perspectives on the development of programs under the legislation. In this regard, we need to understand more fully the applicability of the coordinator centers used in Mexico in Indian program administration.

Impressive accomplishments have been made by BIA, U.S. Office of Education and Johnson O'Malley programs in teacher and educational administrator training, curriculum development and bilingual-bicultural education programs. Our concern is to what extent these have been evaluated and organized as a body of knowledge or identification as an alternative educational system. Or are these efforts seen as a series of projects whose ultimate meaning in new educational theory or technique remains vague.

If seen as programs, can one, for example, determine what the total number of bilingual education programs are in the Indian community, to what extent have these been successful in whatever range of stated objectives, how do these compare with other programs dealing with Indian languages or other languages, how do they compare with other countries such as in Mexico or South American, and what is the overall impact of public schools educational design or in areas of multicultural education?

Have we truly initiated educational research which incorporates the expertise of Indian community authorities? In this regard, we are concerned with research in: (1) understanding the community resource and development process, a process that includes recognition, development and application of human and material resources unique to the Indian community; (2) determining to what extent we have fully understood and utilized the measurement of culture from the internal (emic) perspective. It is possible perhaps to utilize persons who are training as indigenous language program instructors as colleagues in cultural linguistics research such as the study on an Apache Writing System done by Dr. Keith Basso, with two Apache colleagues, one of whom, Silas Johns, was a medicine man.

In early childhood education, where older adults are completing training programs in this field toward degrees. In such cases, aides continued close contact with their Indian community as parent, teacher and member in a traditional cultural system we should begin to investigate the possibility of education programs which may be functional programs much like that considered in Humanistic or confluent education approaches.

There are other areas of program development in which certain levels of expertise and accumulation of data suggest we can possibly initiate a new kind of research within the concept of alternative educational systems.

Does the current legislation address the issue or concern of research? What type of research are we defining for other agencies to conduct in partnership fashion with the Indian community? Does the BIA maintain and espouse an explorative as well as descriptive research function in such areas or does it advocate for similar applied research in other areas of government?

We have conducted major studies in the achievement of Indian students all too often not very satisfactory in the results. That is the output side of research. At hand is the opportunity to begin study on the input level which includes the meaning of home, parent and community in relation to student or school program development.

What is suggested here is a range of on-going and immediate research and development processes which incorporates government administrator, social scientist, Indian community expertise and education program developer.

The character of national and regional Indian education development suggests that we must develop better regional and local data on the characteristics of relationships between Indian communities and outside institutions, agencies and programs.

Whether at local, regional or national levels, there must be some way to combine and coordinate information on community development through a scientific, humanistic process which would constantly test the efficacy of national legislation. In Spanish colonial law, Viceroys in the New World had the prerogative of responding to the Crown's instructions with the phrase, "Obedezco pero no cumplo," "I obey but do not comply." As such, royal law was measured by its benefit or disadvantages on a local basis.

In a recent address to the American Anthropology Association, Dr. Miguel León-Portilla, dean of Náhuatl (Aztec) language and culture studies, described the situation which faces us today. In his appraisal of culture change, Dr. León-Portilla pointed out all cultures today are endangered, whether national entities or minority groups. Causes for this predicament are found in acceleration of processes of change, technological developments, mass communications that bring peoples together, bitter confrontations of economic interests and "....the ambitions of various types of hegemonies." In observation of these realities, he asked:

> "Are not sociologist, philosophers, historians and anthropologists, who have perceived the predicament of an endangered culture, professionally obliged to investigate the innermost meaning of this, its causes and possible consequences? Should they not be concerned with making the results of their research known, especially to those who indeed do hold the power to make political, social and economic decisions?"

Four concepts facilitate the approach to the situation according to Dr. León-Portilla:

> 1. Sense of identity which denotes ".....a consciousness shared by the members of a society who consider themselves in possession of elements and traits..." that are different from others. Cultural diversity is based on language traditions, beliefs, symbols, value systems, a sense of origin and sense of destiny, "shared in common, defined by ancestral territory, a world vision," sometimes described as an ethos. Cultural identity is essential to the existence of any

group. It is essential in defining and enriching possible forms of interaction ".....and participation within the context of a larger social or national entity."

2. Acculturation or the contacts and relationships between groups with different cultures. Its forms are positive and negative.

3. Nepantla, a term from classical náhuatl, its literal meaning "caught in the middle" describes the status of many in the present set of situations affecting minority groups.

4. Ecosis refers to the structuring of community, its adaptation to the environment, the introduction of changes in it, with the purpose to make of it the home of the community--the homeland--whose resources are to be used for the well being of the group. The function of ecosis, requires ".....a key role.....[be played] by world vision, the traditions, the value system, the symbols and institutions of the group." Ecosis implies uninterrupted processes of change, whether in the internal structures of the group or in the forms and techniques by which the natural environment is dealt with.

The situation is critical, and Dr. León-Portilla urged new approaches in educational research and program development which provide opportunities for investigation to be done from the inside and the outside of the cultural groups. He urges, "....studies should be done by members of a culture on their own culture; his will lead to an enriching of their own consciousness of identity by contrasting it with the images that others have of it. Opinions coming from the outside will then be considered more critically and thus they will not easily become vehicles of subtle pressures for induced acculturation." [emphasis added.]

All these remarks are familiar in the history of Indian education. They underline obvious and logical next steps to take in developing a new policy with real hope for implementation and success. The BIA and sister federal agencies are obligated to conduct inventories of their own resources, devise more efficient ways to deliver services and to conduct on-going research which will deepen their own insight into the significance of a changing character in the Indian community. The key to full and successful interpretation or function of self-determination is the degree to which the external agencies are modified to be truly responsive and supportive in the communities efforts. The necessary changes that must take place in the BIA or other agencies are unprecedented. One must remember that the changes and pressures on Indian communities are also unprecedented.

In the final analysis, the decades before us are times described in terms of:

The ultimate purpose of futurism in education is not to create elegantly complex, well-ordered, accurate images of the future, but to help learners cope with real life crises, opportunities and perils. It is to strengthen the individual's practical ability to anticipate and adapt to change, whether through invention, informed acquiescence, or through intelligent resistance.

To function well in a fast-shifting environment, the learner must have the opportunity to do more than receive and store data; she or

> he must have the opportunity to make change or fail in the attempt. This implies a basic modification of the relationship between educational theory and practice. (Tofler, ed.) Learning for Tomorrow The Role of the Future in Education, p. 13)

It is, of course, hoped that the future does not hold another Meriam Report or similar studies that have marked time in the question of Indian education. Rather, we hoped for the future reports to be significant assessments on the rapid achievements that will have taken place because of the fully developed and enlightened programs that occurred in Indian education over the next generation. There is great opportunity to implement the long standing recommendations, but not without major alteration of educational strategy and design in the field of Indian community development role of outside agency administrator.

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